A SYNOPSIS OR GENERAL VIEW OF THE WORKS OF PLATO

LONDON:

Printed by S. RICHARDSON;

And Sold by J. NOURSE, in *The Strand*;
W. SANDBY, over-againſt *St. Dunſtan's Church, Fleet-Street*; and
R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-Mall.*

M DCC LIX.

[Price One Shilling.]

PAGAN WORKS

OF THE

GENERAL VIEW

OR

SYNOPSIS

OF

A

SYNOPSIS

OR

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

WORKS

OF

PLATO

PLATO

OF

WORKS

THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY

OF

GENERAL VIEW

OF

SYNOPSIS

A

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL *GRANVILLE*,

PRESIDENT

OF HIS *MAJESTY*'S PRIVY COUNCIL:

THIS ESSAY ON

THE WORKS OF PLATO,

ONE OF THE GREATEST MASTERS

OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

IN ANCIENT TIMES,

Is,

With the HIGHEST RESPECT and VENERATION,

DULY inſcribed,

by his LORDSHIP'S

moſt obedient Humble Servant

Floyer Sydenham

THE

WORKS

OF

PLATO,

ABRIDGED,

WITH

AN ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION

OF THE

DOCTRINES AND OPINIONS

OF THE

MOST CELEBRATED ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS;

ESPECIALLY OF THOSE

WHO FLOURISHED IN THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR,

ONE OF THE GREATEST MASTERS

OF

PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETOR,

BY R. WILKS, 57, CHANCERY LANE.

1804.

A

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

WORKS

OF

PLATO

THE Dialogues of *Plato* are of various Kinds; not only with regard to thoſe different *Matters*, which are the *Subjects* of them; but in reſpect of the *Manner* alſo, in which they are *compoſed* or *framed*, and of the *Form*, under which they make their *Appearance* to the Reader. It will therefore, as I imagine, be not improper, in Purſuance of the Admonition given us by *Plato* himſelf

himſelf in his Dialogue named [1] *Phædrus*, and in Imitation of the Example ſet us by the [2] ancient *Platoniſts*, to *diſtinguiſh* the ſeveral *Kinds*; by dividing them, firſt, into the *moſt General*; and then, ſubdividing into the *Subordinate*; till we come to thoſe *lower Species*, that particularly and preciſely denote the Nature of the ſeveral Dialogues, and from which they ought to take their reſpective Denominations.

The moſt General Diviſion of the Writings of *Plato*, is into thoſe of the SCEPTICAL Kind, and thoſe of the DOGMATICAL. In the former Sort, nothing is expreſsly either proved or aſſerted: Some Philoſophical Queſtion only is *conſidered* and *examined*; and the Reader is left to Himſelf, to draw ſuch Concluſions, and diſcover ſuch Truths, as the Philoſopher means to *inſinuate*. This is done, either in the Way of INQUIRY, or in the Way of CONTROVERSY and DISPUTE. In the Way of *Controverſy* are carried on all ſuch Dialogues, as tend to eradicate *falſe* Opinions; and that,

[1] Ἐὰν μή τις κατ' εἴδη διαιρεῖσθαι τὰ ὄντα, καὶ μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ δυνατὸς ᾖ καθ' ἓν ἕκαστον περιλαμβάνειν, ἕποτ' ἔστι τεχνικὸς λόγων πέρι, καθ' ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ. Whoever is unable to divide and diſtinguiſh Things into their ſeveral Sorts or Species; and on the other hand, referring Every Particular to its proper Species, to comprehend them All in One General Idea; will never underſtand any Writings, of which thoſe Things are the Subject, like a true Critick, upon thoſe high Principles of Art, to which the Human Underſtanding reaches. Πλατ. Φαιδρ. We have thought proper, here, to paraphraſe this Paſſage, for the Sake of giving to every Part of ſo important a Sentence its full Force, agreeably to the Tenor of *Plato*'s Doctrine; and in order to initiate our Readers into a Way of Thinking, that probably Many of them are as yet unacquainted with.

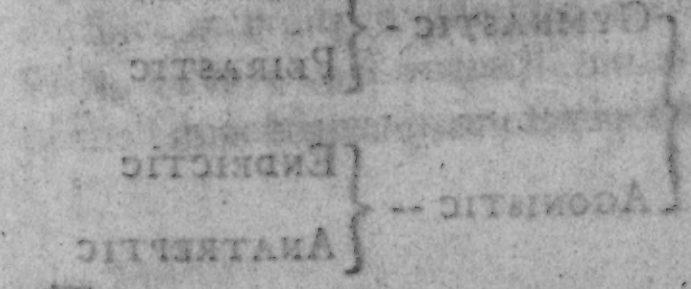
[2] See Διογ. Λαερτ. βιβ. γ'.

either

either indirectly, by involving them in Difficulties, and EMBARRASSING the Maintainers of them; or directly, by CONFUTING them. In the Way of *Inquiry* proceed Thoſe, whoſe Tendency is to raiſe in the Mind *right* Opinions; and that, either by EXCITING to the Purſuit of ſome Part of Wiſdom, and ſhewing in what Manner to inveſtigate it; or by leading the Way, and HELPING the Mind forward in the Search.

The Dialogues of the Other Kind, the *Dogmatical* or Didactic, *teach explicitly* ſome Point of Doctrine: And this they do, either by laying it down in the AUTHORITATIVE Way, or by proving it in the Way of Reaſon and ARGUMENT. In the *Authoritative* Way the Doctrine is delivered, ſometimes by the Speaker himſelf MAGISTERIALLY, at other times as derived to Him by TRADITION from Wiſe Men. The *Argumentative* or *Demonſtrative* Method of Teaching, uſed by *Plato*, proceeds either through ANALYTICAL Reaſoning, *reſolving* Things into their Principles, and from known or allowed Truths tracing out the Unknown; or through INDUCTION, from a Multitude of Particulars, *inferring* ſome General Thing, in which they all agree.

According to this Diviſion is framed the following Scheme, or Table: which having been already explained, our Readers, it is hoped, will pardon any *new Term* there made Uſe of, or any *new Meaning* given to Words already authoriſed.



DIALOGUES

- [3] DIALOGUES
  - SCEPTICAL
    - DISPUTATIVE
      - EMBARRASSING
      - CONFUTING
    - INQUISITIVE
      - EXCITING
      - ASSISTING
  - DOGMATICAL
    - DEMONSTRATIVE
      - ANALYTICAL
      - INDUCTIONAL
    - AUTHORITATIVE
      - MAGISTERIAL
      - TRADITIONAL

The

[3] We have, given us by *Diogenes Laertius*, another Diviſion of the Characters, as he calls them, of *Plato*'s Writings, different from That exhibited in the Scheme above. This we have thought proper to ſubjoin, on Account of its Antiquity, and General Reception: neither are we fond of obtruding our Own upon the Reader, without leaving him his Choice of an Alternative; but are deſirous, that he may judge for Himſelf, upon a Compariſon of Both together, and make Uſe of That, to which he pleaſes to give the Preference.

- DIALOGUES —
  - DIDACTIC —
    - SPECULATIVE
      - PHYSICAL
      - LOGICAL
    - PRACTICAL -
      - ETHICAL
      - POLITICAL
  - INQUISITIVE -
    - GYMNASTIC -
      - MAIEUTIC
      - PEIRASTIC
    - AGONISTIC --
      - ENDEICTIC
      - ANATREPTIC

The Philoſopher, in thus varying his Manner, and diverſifying his Writings into theſe ſeveral Kinds, means not merely to entertain with their Variety; nor to teach, on different Occaſions, with more or leſs Plainneſs and Perſpicuity; nor yet to inſinuate different Degrees of Certainty in

The Learned Reader will obſerve the latter Half of the Dialogues, according to this Scheme, to be deſcribed by Metaphors taken from the *Gymnaſtic Art*: The Dialogues, here termed GYMNASTIC, being imagined to bear a Similitude to the *Exerciſe*; the AGONISTIC, to the Combat. In the loweſt Sub-diviſion, indeed, the Word *Maieutic* is a Metaphor of another Kind, fully explained in *Plato*'s *Theætetus*: the MAIEUTIC Dialogues, however, were ſuppoſed to reſemble Giving the *Rudiments* of the Art; as the PEIRASTIC were, to repreſent a *Skirmiſh*, or Trial of Proficiency: the ENDEICTIC were, it ſeems, likened to the Exhibiting a *Specimen* of Skill; and the ANATREPTIC, to Preſenting the Spectacle of a thorough *Defeat*, or ſound Drubbing.

The Principal Reaſon, why we contented not ourſelves with this Account of the Difference between the Dialogues of *Plato*, was the Capital Error there committed in the *Firſt* Sub-diviſion, of Courſe extending itſelf through the *Latter*. This Error conſiſts in dividing the *Didactic* Dialogues with Regard to their *Subject-Matter*; while Thoſe of the *Inquiſitive* Sort are divided with Reſpect to the *Manner* of their *Compoſition*. So that the Sub-diviſions fall not, with any Propriety, under One and the Same *General Head*. Beſides, a Novice in the Works of *Plato* might hence be led naturally to ſuppoſe, that the Dogmatical or *Didactic* Dialogues are, All of them, written in the *Same Manner*; and that the Others, thoſe of the *Inquiſitive* Kind, by Us termed Sceptical, have *no* Particular *Subjects* at all; or, if they have, that Their Subjects are *different* from Thoſe of the Didactic Dialogues, and are conſequently *unphiloſophical*; there being no *Topick* in Philoſophy, which is not reducible, according to the Doctrine of the *Platoniſts*, to One or Other of *Theſe*, PHYSICKS, LOGICK, ETHICKS, or POLITICKS. Now Every One of the Suppoſitions, here mentioned, is far from being True.

the Doctrines themſelves: But he takes this Method, as a conſummate Maſter of the Art of *Compoſition* in the Dialogue-Way of Writing; from the different Characters of the Speakers, as from different Elements in the Frame of theſe Dramatic Dialogues, or different Ingredients in their Mixture, producing ſome peculiar *Genius*, and Turn of Temper, as it were, in Each.

Socrates indeed is in almoſt All of them the *Principal Speaker:* but when he falls into the Company of ſome arrogant *Sophiſt*; when the modeſt Wiſdom, and clear Science of the One, are contraſted with the confident Ignorance, and blind Opinionativeneſs of the Other; DISPUTE and Controverſy muſt of Courſe ariſe: where the falſe Pretender cannot fail of being either *puzzled*, or *confuted*. TO PUZZLE him only is ſufficient, if there be *no Other* Perſons *preſent*; becauſe Such a Man can never be confuted in his own Opinion: but when there is an *Audience* round them, in Danger of being miſled by Sophiſtry into Error, then is the true Philoſopher to exert his Utmoſt, and the vain Sophiſt to be CONVICTED and expoſed.

In Some Dialogues *Plato* repreſents his Great Maſter mixing in Converſation with *Young Men* of the beſt Families in the Commonwealth. When Theſe happen to have *docile* Diſpoſitions and *fair* Minds, then is Occaſion given to the Philoſopher to call forth the latent Seeds of Wiſdom, and to cultivate the noble Plants with True Doctrine, in the affable and familiar Way of *Joint Inquiry*. To This is owing the INQUISITIVE Genius of ſuch Dialogues: where, by a ſeeming

Equality in the Converſation, the Curioſity or Zeal of the mere *Stranger* is EXCITED; That of the *Diſciple* is encouraged; and by proper Queſtions, the Mind is AIDED and forwarded in the Search of Truth.

At Other Times, the *Philoſophic Hero* of theſe Dialogues is introduced in a *higher* Character, engaged in Diſcourſe with Men of more *improved* Underſtandings, and *enlightened* Minds. At Such Seaſons he has an Opportunity of *teaching* in a more *explicit* Manner, and of diſcovering the *Reaſons* of Things. For to Such an Audience Truth is due, and all [4] *Demonſtration* poſſible in the teaching it. Hence, in the Dialogues compoſed of theſe Perſons, naturally ariſes the juſtly Argumentative or DEMONSTRATIVE Genius; of the ANALYTICAL Kind, when the *Principles* of Mind or *Science*, the *Leading Truths*, are to be unfolded; of the INDUCTIONAL Kind, when any *Subſequent Truth*, of the ſame Rank with Others, any *Part* of *Science*, is meant to be diſplayed.

But when the Doctrine to be taught admits not of Demonſtration; of which Kind is the Doctrine of *Outward Nature*, being only *Hypothetical*, and a Matter of *Opinion*; the Doctrine of *Antiquities*, being only *Traditional*, and a Matter of *Belief*; and the Doctrine of *Laws*, being *Injunctional*, and the Matter of *Obedience*; the Air of AUTHORITY

[4] The *Platoniſts* rightly obſerve, that *Socrates*, in *theſe* Caſes, makes Uſe of *Demonſtrative* and juſt Reaſoning; (ἀποδεικτικῷ;) whereas to the Novice he is contented with Arguments only *Probable*, (πιθανοῖς;) and againſt the litigious Sophiſt often employs Such, as are (ἐριστικοὶ) *Puzzling*, and *Contentious*. See Ἀλκιν. Εἰσαγωγ. Κεφ. ϛ'.

is then aſſumed: in the former Caſes, the Doctrine is TRADITIONALLY handed down to Others from the Authority of *ancient Sages*; in the latter, is MAGISTERIALLY pronounced with the Authority of a *Legiſlator*. That this Turn may be given to *ſuch* Dialogues with Propriety, and Juſtice to the Character of the Speakers, the reaſoning *Socrates* is laid aſide, or only ſuſtains ſome *lower* and *obſcure* Part; while That, which is the *Principal*, or *Shining*, is allotted to ſome *Other Philoſopher*, to whom may properly be attributed a more *Authoritative* Manner; to Such an *Antiquarian*, as may be *credited*, or deemed to have received the beſt *Information*; to Such a *Stateſman* or *Politician*, as may fairly be preſumed beſt qualified for the *making Laws*.

THUS much for the *Manner*, in which the Dialogues of *Plato* are ſeverally compoſed, and the Caſt of *Genius* given them in their Compoſition. The *Form*, under which they *appear*, or the external *Character* that marks them, is of *Three* Sorts; either purely *Dramatic*, like the Dialogue of Tragedy or Comedy; or purely *Narrative*, where a former Converſation is ſuppoſed to be committed to Writing, and communicated to ſome abſent Friend; or of the *Mixed* Kind, like a Narration in Dramatic Poems, where is recited to ſome Perſon preſent the Story of Things paſt.

HAVING thus divided the Dialogues of *Plato*, in reſpect of that inward Form or Compoſition, which creates their Genius; and again, with Reference to that outward Form, which,

which marks them, like Flowers and other Vegetables, with a certain Character; we are farther to make a Diviſion of them, with regard to their [5] *Subject*, and their *Deſign*; beginning with their Deſign, or End, becauſe for the Sake of This are all the Subjects choſen. The End of all the Writings of *Plato* is That, which is the END of all true PHILOSOPHY or Wiſdom, the Perfection and the HAPPINESS of MAN. MAN therefore is the General Subject: And the *firſt* Buſineſs of PHILOSOPHY muſt be to inquire, What is that Being, called MAN, who is to be made Happy; and what is his NATURE, in the Perfection of which is placed his Happineſs.

The Philoſopher conſiders Man, as a Compound Being, conſiſting of *Body* and of SOUL: the *ſuperior* Part of which *Soul* is MIND; by which he is intimately connected with, and of near Kindred to, the *Divine Nature*; the *inferior* Part is made up of *Paſſions* and *Affections*, reducible All to *Two* Kinds, having All of them either *Pain* or *Pleaſure* for their Object; by Means of which, and alſo of his *Body*, he is outwardly related to, and connected with, the Fellows of *his own Species*, and with all *Outward Nature*. He is moved by ſome commanding Power within him, the Principle of Action, commonly called *Will*; and when the *Motion*, given by it, is *Right*, and in *Right Direction*, moves him for his *real Good*. The Motion and Direction Both are right, when the One is

[5] It is by no Means intended here to preſent our Readers with an Epitome or Abſtract of *Plato*'s Doctrine, any farther than may ſerve for the preſent, in ſome Meaſure, to ſhew the *Connection* of his *Writings*, and the *Relation* which the ſeveral *Subjects* of them have One to Another.

meaſured

meaſured and the Other *dictated* by *Right Reaſon.* The Motion is thus meaſured, and the Direction thus dictated; or, in other Words, the *Meaſure* and the *Rule* of a Man's Actions are agreeable to *Right Reaſon*, when the *Governing Power* within him, the Reaſon of his *own Mind*, harmoniſes with Reaſon *Univerſal:* And This it does, when his Mind *ſees* Things as they *are*, and *partakes* of *Truth:* becauſe Truth is the *Standard* of Right Reaſon, and is the *Same* in *Every*, and in *All* Mind; of Mind the *Perfection* and the *End.* By Means of *Truth* therefore, or the *Knowlege* of it, (for the Mind is in *Poſſeſſion* of Truth by *knowing* it) is a Man's *Reaſon* empowered to *govern* him, and his *Will* to *move* him, for his *Good.* Now the Power of ſo governing and ſo moving is Man's *Virtue:* the *Virtue* of Every Thing being its *Power* to produce or procure ſome certain *Good.* Thus the Two great Objects of the *Platonic* Philoſophy are TRUTH and VIRTUE; Truth, the Good of *all Mind*; and Virtue, the Good of the *Whole Man.*

TRUTH, that is, the *Reality* of Things, being Eternal, Abſolute, and Independant upon any Particular Mind; the *real Eſſences* of Things not only always *are*, but always have the *ſame Manner* alſo of Being, that is, Uniform and Invariable, not ſubject to the Differences or Changes of any Thoughts concerning them, and indeed ſeated above the Comprehenſion or the Reach of any Particular Minds. Our *Ideas*, when true, are the exact *Copies* or perfect *Images* of Theſe: and when we *know* them ſo to be, and can reſolve them

them into their *Principles*, then have we true *Science*. It is the Nature of the *Human Soul* to have theſe *Ideas generated* in her, and to *partake* of MIND Eternal and Immutable. Hence She is the *Offspring*, and the *Image*, of the *Divine Nature*: and hence by *Participation* of That, which is *Eternal*, and whoſe Principle is UNITY, She is Herſelf *Indiſſolable* and *Immortal*.

The *Reſemblances* of thoſe *real Eſſences* are alſo in *Outward Things*, ſerving firſt to *excite* in the Soul thoſe true *Ideas*. But becauſe of the ever-changing and tranſient Nature of ſuch Things, thoſe Reſemblances being uncertain; they are no leſs apt to raiſe falſe *Fancies*, and to give Birth to erroneous *Opinions*.

But beſides theſe *Natural Repreſentations* of Things, Others there are which are *Arbitrary*; invented by Men, in order to expreſs or ſignify to Each Other whatever they perceive or fancy, know or think. Theſe are *Words*, framed into *Propoſitions* and *Diſcourſes*; in which we give an Account of what we take to be the Nature of Things. They are delivered in *Three* Ways; either in the Way of *Reaſon*, applying themſelves to the *Underſtanding*, with Pretenſions to *prove*; in the Way of *Oratory*, addreſſing the *Paſſions*, in order to *perſuade*; or in the Way of *Poetry*, engaging the *Imagination*, with a View to *pleaſe*. The Mind therefore is in Danger of being ſeduced into Error by Words, in *Four* different Ways: either, by WRONG NAMES attributed to Things, diſguiſing thus their real Nature; by SOPHISTICAL Arts of REASONING, thus exhibiting Falſhood in the Dreſs of Truth;

Truth; by the adulterated Colours of RHETORICK, deluding us; or the fantaſtic Figuring of POETRY, enchanting us. In this Manner does *Plato* warn his *Readers* againſt the Ways, that lead aſide into Error; while he conducts his *Followers* along the Road of Truth.

As to the Other Object of *Platonic* Wiſdom, VIRTUE, or the ſettled Power in the Soul of governing Man rightly; conſidered as *adhering* to its Divine Principle, *Truth*, it takes the Form of SANCTITY; conſidered as *preſiding* over every *Word* and *Action*, it has the Nature of PRUDENCE; in controlling and ordering the *Concupiſcible* Part of the Soul, or the Affections and Paſſions that regard *Pleaſure*, it is called TEMPERANCE; in compoſing and directing the *Iraſcible* Part of the Soul, or the Affections and Paſſions relative to *Pain*, it aſſumes the Name of FORTITUDE. And thus far it reſpects *Private* Good *immediately*, yet extending its *Influence* to the Good of *Others*, through the Connections of Kindred Nature and of Social Life.

But ſince every Man is a Member of ſome *Civil Community*, is linked with the Fellows of his *own Species*, is related to every Nature *Superior* and *Divine*, and is a Part alſo of *Univerſal* Nature; he muſt always of Neceſſity participate of the Good and Evil of every Whole, greater as well as leſs, to which he belongs; and has an Intereſt in the Well-being of every Species, with which he is connected. With *immediate* Reference therefore to the Good of *Others*, to the *Public* Good, to the *General* Good of Mankind, and to

Univerſal

Univerſal Good; yet *remotely*, and by Way of *Conſequence* affecting *Private* Good; *Virtue*, as She regulates the Conduct of Man, in order to theſe Ends, has the Title given her of JUSTICE, *Univerſal*, or *Particular* in all its various Branches, FRIENDSHIP, PATRIOTISM, *Humanity*, *Equity* and PIETY, with every *ſubordinate* Duty ſpringing out of Theſe.

But ſince, in order to effect thoroughly, and fully to accompliſh, the Good of any *Vital Whole*, there muſt be a *Conſpiration* and *Co-operation* of all the Parts; there ought in Every Public to be ONE MIND or LAW preſiding over, diſpoſing, and *directing All*; that through All may run *One Spirit*, and in All *One Virtue* operate. To illuſtrate This, the Idea is preſented of a perfect COMMONWEALTH, and a juſt Model is framed of Public LAWS. And *in This* the Nature of *Virtue* is ſeen moſt Godlike, that is, of Herſelf moſt diffuſive, and of the moſt Good productive, in her making *All happy*, as She is POLITICAL and LEGISLATIVE.

Thus all *Virtue* is *Order* and *Proportion*; whether in the *Soul* of *Man*, or in a *Civil State*: and putting *Meaſure* into all the Manners, and into every Action, whether of Private or of Public Life, produces in them *Symmetry* and *Beauty*: for of Theſe, *proportioned Meaſure* is the *Principle*. This She does, becauſe the *Rule*, according to which the Mind by her Will then governs, is *Beauty Itſelf*; and the *Science*, through which She governs, is the Science of that *Beauty*. For TRUTH and BEAUTY concur in *One*; and where-ever They are, there is alſo GOOD. The LOVE of BEAUTY then

is nothing different from that Firſt and Leading Motive in all Minds to the Purſuit of every Thing, That from whence the Philoſopher ſets out in his Inquiry after Wiſdom, the DESIRE of GOOD. Thus the *Perfection* of *Man* conſiſts in his *Similitude* to this SUPREME BEAUTY; and in his *Union* with it is found his SUPREME GOOD.

THE Dialogues of *Plato*, with reſpect to their *Subjects*, may be divided, conformably to this ſlight Sketch of their *Deſign*, into the *Speculative*, the *Practical*, and ſuch as are of a *Mixed* Nature. The Subjects of theſe *laſt* are either *General*, comprehending Both the Others; or *Differential*, diſtinguiſhing them. The *General* Subjects are either *Fundamental*, or *Final*: Thoſe of the Fundamental Kind are PHILOSOPHY, HUMAN NATURE, the SOUL OF MAN: of the Final Kind are LOVE, BEAUTY, GOOD. The *Differential* regard *Knowlege*, as it ſtands related to *Practice*: in which are conſidered two Queſtions; One of which is, whether *Virtue* is to be *taught*; the Other is, whether Error in the *Will* depends on Error in the *Judgment*. The Subjects of the *Speculative* Dialogues relate either to *Words*, or to *Things*. Of the former Sort are ETYMOLOGY, SOPHISTRY, RHETORICK, POETRY: of the latter Sort are SCIENCE, TRUE BEING, the PRINCIPLES OF MIND, OUTWARD NATURE. The *Practical* Subjects relate either to *Private* Conduct, and the Government of the Mind over the Whole *Man*; or to his Duty towards *Others* in his ſeveral *Relations*; or to the Government of a *Civil State*, and the *Public* Conduct of a Whole *People*.

People. Under theſe Three Heads rank in Order the Particular Subjects Practical; VIRTUE in General, SANCTITY, TEMPERANCE, FORTITUDE; JUSTICE, FRIENDSHIP, PATRIOTISM, PIETY; the RULING MIND in a Civil Government, the FRAME AND ORDER of a *State*, LAW in General, and laſtly, thoſe *Rules* of Government and of Public Conduct, the CIVIL LAWS.

THUS, for the Sake of giving the Reader a Scientific, that is, a *comprehenſive* and at the ſame Time a *diſtinct*, View of *Plato*'s Writings, we have attempted to exhibit to him their juſt and natural Diſtinctions; whether he chuſes to conſider them with regard to their *Inward Form* or *Eſſence*, their *Outward Form* or *Appearance*, their *Matter*, or their *End*: that is, in thoſe more familiar Terms, we have uſed in this Synopſis, their GENIUS, their CHARACTER, their SUBJECT, and their DESIGN.

THE

PROLOGUE.

SOCRATES, *the Hero of theſe Dramatic Dialogues, lived a private Life at* Athens; *quiet and ſtudious, yet in the higheſt Degree ſocial, deigning his Converſe and communicating his Knowlege, in proper Meaſure, to all Sorts of People. In this City therefore muſt of Courſe lie the ordinary Scene of thoſe Converſations, in which* Socrates *preſides, or hath a Share. As that wiſe Man however uſed much Exerciſe, and died before his Days of Exerciſe were paſt, Probability admits the Scene to be now and then diverſified, by being changed to the adjacent Country. Nor is it in theſe Caſes either confined to One Spot of Ground, or in General only and at large Rural: ſometimes opening into the Walks round the City-Walls; at other times lengthened along the Way to ſome appendant Sea-Port or Village: now widened into the Fields and Groves; now winding along the Banks of the* Ilyſſus. *Of thoſe Converſations, that paſs within the City, the Particular*

Spot

Spot is no leſs varied: here it is the open Street; there the private Houſe of One of the Company; but oftener one or other Public Place of General Reſort; as the Place of Exchange, or ſome Court of Judicature; the Place where the Gymnic Exerciſes were uſed, or ſome School where they were taught: neither is the Banquet-Room, nor the Priſon wanting, to compleat the Variety. But in every Dialogue the exacteſt Care is taken to adapt the Scene, as much as poſſible, to the Subject: even in the ſame Dialogue the Scene is ſhifted, if the Oeconomy of the Drama requires the different Parts of it to be diſpoſed in different Places. By all this Diverſification, Propriety is preſerved, the Fancy fond of Change is entertained, and the Speculative Mind is preſented with a true, that is, a variegated Picture of Human Life. Our Readers, having thus received ſome Sort of Information, concerning the Country whither they are going; may probably deſire to have the like General Notice given them, concerning the Names and Titles of Thoſe, to whoſe Acquaintance they are going to be introduced. Each of the Dialogues then of Plato *bears Two Titles; One of which was in all Probability prefixed to it by* Plato *himſelf. This is uſually taken from the Name of the Perſon, with whom* Socrates *there is repreſented holding Diſcourſe: or, if ſeveral Perſons are Parties in the Converſation, then Whoever makes the moſt ſhining Figure in it, next after* Socrates, *gives Name to the Dialogue. The Other Title ſeems to have been attributed*

buted to it by Some of the [6] Platonic *School, denoting the ſuppoſed Subject of that Converſation. That theſe Secondary Titles have not the Authority of* PLATO, *is evident* [7] *from the Diſagreement and Uncertainty of Some of them, and the Impropriety of Others. We have thought it convenient to retain Both: for the Sake however of Diſtinction, calling the Firſt, (and, we preſume, not improperly,) the* Name *of the Dialogue; and the Other, the* Title *of it. But where the Title appeared improper, we have attempted to aſſign a Better; and where, in different Manuſcripts of the Same Dialogue, were found different Titles, to prefer the Beſt.*

[6] This, we think, appears from *Diogenes Laertius*, who collected his Account of the Life and Writings of *Plato* from various Authors, Philoſophers, Criticks, and Grammarians: and as he always fairly cites his Authorities for every Thing, which he advances; ſo upon this Head he informs us, that *Thraſyllus* made Uſe of Double Inſcriptions or Titles. Διπλαῖς δὲ χρῆται [Θράσυλλος] ταῖς ἐπιγραφαῖς ἑκάστῳ τῶν βιβλίων. Διογ. Λαερτ. βιβ. γ'. From whence it is plain, that the Uſe of them was not General at leaſt, till the Time of this *Thraſyllus*.

[7] Another Argument, to prove the After-Invention of theſe Secondary Titles, ariſes from this Obſervation; that among the numerous Works of the other Ancient Philoſophers, of which there remain but the mere Titles, preſerved to us by *Laertius*, ſcarce Any is found to bear more than One, till the Time of *Chryſippus* the Verboſe; the Dialogues of the *Socratic* School being uſually inſcribed, after the Manner of *Plato*, with the Name of One of the Speakers; and the Treatiſes of the Other Philoſophers taking their Title uſually from their Subject, and ſometimes, after the Manner of Epiſtles, inſcribed only with the Name of the Perſon to whom they are addreſſed.

THE PROLOGUE